

Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Soldiers of the Izmailovsky Regiment

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Comrade soldiers! The question of the state system is now on the order of the day. The capitalists, in whose hands the state power now rests, desire a parliamentary bourgeois republic, that is, a state system where there is no tsar, but where power remains in the hands of the capitalists who govern the country by means of the old institutions, namely: the police, the bureaucracy, and the standing army.

We desire a different republic, one more in keeping with the interests of the people, more democratic. The revolutionary workers and soldiers of Petrograd have overthrown tsarism, and have cleaned out all the police from the capital. The workers of all the world look with pride and hope to the revolutionary 'workers and soldiers of Russia as the vanguard of the world's liberating army of the working class. The revolution, once begun, must be strengthened and carried on. We shall not allow the police to be re-established! All power in the state, from the bottom up, from the remotest little village to every street block of Petrograd, must belong to the Soviets of Workers', Soldiers', Agricultural Labourers', Peasants' and other Deputies. The central state power uniting these local Soviets must be the Constituent Assembly, National Assembly, or Council of Soviets—no matter by what name you call it.

Not the police, not the bureaucracy, who are unanswerable to the people and placed above the people, not the standing army, separated from the people, but *the people themselves, universally armed* and united in the Soviets, must run the state. It is they who will establish the necessary order, it is they whose authority will not only be obeyed, but *also respected*, by the workers and peasants.

Only this power, only the Soviets of Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, can solve the great question of the land in a non-bureaucratic way and not in the interests of the land owners. The land must not belong to the landowners. The peasant committees must take the land away at once from the landowners, while carefully guarding all the property against damage, and seeing to it that grain production is *increased* in order that the soldiers at the front be better supplied. All the land must belong to the whole nation, and its disposal must be the concern of the local Soviets of Peasants' Deputies. In order that the rich peasants—who are themselves capitalists—may not wrong and deceive the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants, it will be necessary for the latter either to confer, to combine, to unite separately, or to set up Soviets of Agricultural Labourers' Deputies of their own.

Do not allow the police to be re-established, do not let the state power or the administration of the state pass into the hands of the bureaucracy, who are non-elective, undisplaceable, and paid on a bourgeois scale; get together, unite, organise yourselves, trusting no one, depending only on your own intelligence and experience—and Russia will be able to move with a firm, measured, unerring tread toward the liberation of both our own country and of all humanity from the yoke of capital as well as from the horrors of war.

Our government, a government of the capitalists, is continuing the war in the interests of the capitalists. Like the German capitalists, headed by their crowned brigand Wilhelm, the capitalists of *all* the other countries are carrying on the war only for a division of capitalist profits, for domination over the world. Hundreds of millions of people, almost all the countries in the world, have been dragged into this criminal war. Hundreds of billions of capital have been invested in “profitable” undertakings, bringing death, hunger, ruin, and barbarism to the peoples and staggering, scandalously high profits to the capitalists. There is only one way to get out of this frightful war and conclude a truly democratic peace not imposed by force, and that is by transferring all the state power to the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies. The workers and poor peasants, who are not interested in preserving the profits of the capitalists and robbing the weaker nations, will be able to do effectively what the capitalists only promise, namely, end the war by concluding a lasting peace that will assure liberty to all peoples without exception.

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